WORLD ORDER

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WORLD ORDER

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MAN'S UNDISCOVERED FREEDOM

FOR a brief modern period, among a minority of the world's peoples, the ideal of freedom stood as the very pillar sustaining the structure of civilization. During that brief, golden twilight of a secular age it was insisted that men have right to equality of opportunity, to freedom of worship, to freedom of speech, to access to education, to civil liberty, to personal ownership of property and to representation in government. A new social philosophy arose, emphasizing the unlimited possibility of progress for mankind.

Swiftly have war and revolution crushed that ideal to earth, exterminated practically every social expression of liberty organized by previous generations, and engulfed all men in a storm of psychological, economic, political and social pressure equivalent to the direst servitude suffered by peoples of the past. The freedom each group advocated for itself it could not deny to other groups. The result for the world was the rise of nationalism, the organization of economic groups and the growth of religious bodies along lines so uncoordinated that eventual clash was inevitable. These social perturbations reveal the degree to which that secular ideal represented the hope of partisan victory, or at least the prevalence of social indifference, and not the sacrifice for the unity of the race.

Men today, in almost every area of earth, have become the victims of a disordered society more tyrannical than the personal despotism of the kings and captains of old. The overwhelming needs of peoples immersed in international conflict, served by social administrators who are inexperienced, bereft of vision, frightened or partisan and ambitious, produce tyranny and oppression in its most frantic and widespread form. When plowshares are beaten into swords, the institutions of freedom are perverted into instruments of oppression. The very fact that those apparently responsible have no personal evil comparable to the evil result of the confusion brings to the spectacle the quality of nightmare. We cannot exercise moral judgment upon these peoples locked in strife any more than we can apply ethics to a forest fire or a hurricane. Nowhere on earth can one locate in this dire agony any equivalent to the attribute, or capacity, of moral responsibility. The guilt is continuous over a vast period of time, and diffused or apportioned

among all historic races, nations and classes.

The individual has little time or strength to ponder general meaning and value. His day is a supreme struggle to solve problems that pour in upon him like the waters of a rising tide. He no longer knows his rights, his powers nor his duties. Like a pioneer settler in a new land he feels a hostile force lurking behind every hill, and he knows not their numbers, their methods nor even their weapons. He fights grimly on just to sustain himself above the level of degradation or helplessness, hoping that if his children survive they may live in a better society than this jungle which human existence has become. The sense of moral continuity and social purpose has become numbed. Try and trace to its origin any even slight case of injustice or inefficiency and it soon loses itself in an endless waste of social confusion beyond control.

The individual, apparently, is today a helpless, irresponsible being caught up into a social maelstrom which substitutes its iron law of necessity for the free will of men. Wherever he turns, his way is blocked by that iron law, expressed through other men as helpless and irresponsible as he.

This great prison house of history, however, no matter how thick its walls nor high its gates, can only confine and oppress human beings in relation to their personal lives and their social relations. Between man and God no earthly power can ever intervene. Men are helpless so long as they desire only fulfilment in personal and social matters. Seeking them they can be thwarted and deprived, frightened and deceived. But for the soul that resolutely turns to God, modern life is a prison without a roof. In the dimension of spiritual effort and attainment, the grim walls and locked gates have no power to confine.

This is the undiscovered freedom of man, the gift from his Creator which he may forget and deny but which no man can seize nor withhold from any other man. When the economic world has become the fruitlessness of destructive struggle, when the political world has become the clash of mighty powers, the world of the spirit remains free. The discovery of this freedom, the freedom which Christ acclaimed on the cross and the Báb renewed on the scaffold, is the coming of religion, as contrasted with creed and church, to the human spirit.

Nor is this spiritual freedom merely an unworldly compensation for tragic frustration in this world. On the contrary, until qualities and attributes have been established by the soul in its relationship to God, these qualities and attributes are mere illusions in social relations. Truth, honor, integrity, cooperation and love —these facets of man's reality—all receive their vitality as men practise them in spiritual experience. That is why, in the great hour of the renewal of religion, the heroic believers are persecuted and slain. Their experience restores the capacity of honor, truth, cooperation, love and integrity to mankind. Civil liberty will be restored when modern man has learned the freedom offered him on the path to God illumined by Bahá'u'lláh for the new age.

H. H.

PEACE A DIVINE CREATION

III.

SHOGHI EFFENDI

TEN years of unceasing turmoil, so laden with anguish, so fraught with incalculable consequences to the future of civilization, have brought the world to the verge of a calamity too awful to contemplate... Such has been the cumulative effect of these successive crises, following one another with such bewildering rapidity, that the very foundations of society are trembling. The world, to whichever continent we turn our gaze, to however remote a region our survey may extend, is everywhere assailed by forces it can neither explain nor control. . . .

MIGHT we not already discern, as we scan the political horizon, the alignment of those forces that are dividing afresh the continent of Europe into camps of potential combatants, determined upon a contest that may mark, unlike the last war, the end of an epoch, a vast epoch, in the history of human evolution? . . . Might not the bankruptcy of this present, this highly-vaunted materialistic civilization, in itself clear away the choking weeds that now hinder the unfoldment and future efflorescence of God's struggling Faith?

Humanity, whether viewed in the light of man's individual conduct or in the existing relationships between organized communities and nations, has, alas, strayed too far and suffered too great a decline to be redeemed through the unaided efforts of the best among its recognized rulers and statesmen — however disinterested their motives, however concerted their action, however unsparing in their zeal and devotion to its cause. No scheme which the calculations of the highest statesmanship may yet devise; no doctrine which the most distinguished exponents of economic theory may hope to advance; no principle which the most ardent of moralists may strive to inculcate, can provide, in the last resort, adequate foundations upon which the future of a distracted world can be built. . . .

I cannot refrain from appealing to them who stand identified with the Faith to disregard the prevailing notions and the fleeting fashions of the day, and to realize as never before that the exploded theories and the tottering institutions of present-day civilization must needs appear in sharp contrast with those God-given institutions which are destined to arise upon their ruin. . . .

For Bahá'u'lláh . . . has not only imbued mankind with a new and regenerating Spirit. He has not merely

enunciated certain universal principles, or propounded a particular philosophy, however potent, sound and universal these may be. In addition to these He, as well as 'Abdu'l-Bahá after Him, have, unlike the Dispensations of the past, clearly and specifically laid down a set of Laws, established definite institutions, and provided for the essentials of a Divine Economy. These are destined to be a pattern for future society, a supreme instrument for the establishment of the Most Great Peace, and the one agency for the unification of the world, and the proclamation of the reign of righteousness and justice upon the earth. . . .

UNLIKE the Dispensation of Christ, unlike the Dispensation of Muhammad, unlike all the Dispensations of the past, the apostles of Bahá'u'lláh in every land, wherever they labor and toil, have before them in clear, in unequivocal and emphatic language, all the laws, the regulations, the principles, the institutions, the guidance, they require for the prosecution of their task. . . . Therein lies the distinguishing feature of the Bahá'í Revelation. Therein lies the strength of the unity of the Faith, of the validity of a Revelation that claims not to destroy or belittle previous Revalations, but to connect, unify, and fulfill them. . . .

How pathetic indeed are the efforts of those leaders of human institutions who, in utter disregard of the spirit of the age, are striving to adjust national processes, suited to the ancient days of self-contained nations, to an age which must either achieve the unity of the world, as adumbrated by Bahá'u'lláh, or perish. At so critical an hour in the history of civilization it behooves the leaders of all the nations of the world, great and small, whether in the East or in the West, whether victors or vanquished, to give heed to the clarion call of Bahá'u'lláh and, thoroughly imbued with a sense of world solidarity, the *sine quâ non* of loyalty to His Cause, arise manfully to carry out in its entirety the one remedial scheme He, the Divine Physician, has prescribed for an ailing humanity. Let them discard, once for all, every preconceived idea, every national prejudice, and give heed to the sublime counsel of 'Abdul-Bahá, the authorized Expounder of His teachings. *You can best serve your country,* was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's rejoinder* to a high official in the service of the federal government of the United States of America, who had questioned Him as to the best manner in which he could promote the interests of his government and people, *if you strive, in your capacity as a citizen of the world, to assist in the eventual application of the principle of federalism underlying the government of your own country to the relationships now existing between the peoples and nations of the world. . . .*

SOME form of a world Super-State must needs be evolved, in whose favor all the nations of the world will have willingly ceded every claim to make war, certain rights to impose taxation and all rights to maintain armaments, except for purposes of maintaining internal order within their respective dominions

* In the year 1912.

Such a state will have to include within its orbit an International Executive adequate to enforce supreme and unchallengeable authority on every recalcitrant member of the commonwealth; a World Parliament whose members shall be elected by the people in their respective countries and whose election shall be confirmed by their respective governments; and a Supreme Tribunal whose judgment will have a binding effect even in such cases where the parties concerned did not voluntarily agree to submit their case to its consideration. A world community in which all economic barriers will have been been permanently demolished and the interdependence of Capital and Labor definitely recognized; in which the clamor of religious fanaticism and strife will have been forever stilled; in which the flame of racial animosity will have been finally extinguished; in which a single code of international law—the product of the considered judgment of the world's federated representatives—shall have as its sanction the instant and coercive intervention of the combined forces of the federated units; and finally a world community in which the fury of a capricious and militant nationalism will have been transmuted into an abiding consciousness of world citizenship—such indeed, appears, in its broadest outline, the Order anticipated by Bahá'u'lláh, an Order that shall come to be regarded as the fairest fruit of a slowly maturing age. . . .

THE call of Bahá'u'lláh is primarily directed against all forms of provincialism, all insularities and prejudices. . . . For legal standards, political and economic theories are solely designed to safeguard the interests of humanity as a whole, and not humanity to be crucified for the preservation of the integrity of any particular law or doctrine. . . . The principle of the Oneness of Mankind —the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve—is no mere outburst of ignorant emotionalism or an expression of vague and pious hope. . . . Its implications are deeper, its claims greater than any which the Prophets of old were allowed to advance. Its message is applicable not only to the individual, but concerns itself primarily with the nature of those essential relationships that must bind all the states and nations as members of one human family. . . .

It represents the consummation of human evolution. . . .

That the forces of a world catastrophe can alone precipitate such a new phase of human thought is, alas, becoming increasingly apparent. . . . Nothing but a fiery ordeal, out of which humanity will emerge, chastened and prepared, can succeed in implanting that sense of responsibility which the leaders of a new-born age must arise to shoulder. . . . Has not 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself asserted in unequivocal language that *"another war, fiercer than the last, will assuredly break out?"* . . .

THE Revelation, of which Bahá'u'lláh is the source and center, abrogates none of the religions which have preceded it, nor does it attempt, in the slightest degree, to distort their

features or to belittle their value. It disclaims any intention of dwarfing any of the Prophets of the past, or of whittling down the eternal verity of Their teachings. It can, in no wise, conflict with the spirit that animates Their claims, nor does it seek to undermine the basis of any man's allegiance to Their cause. Its declared, its primary purpose, is to enable every adherent of these Faiths to obtain a fuller understanding of the religion with which he stands identified, and to acquire a clearer apprehension of its purpose. It is neither eclectic in the presentation of its truths, nor arrogant in the affirmation of its claims. Its teachings revolve around the fundamental principle that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is progressive, not final. Unequivocally and without the least reservation it proclaims all established religions to be divine in origin, identical in their aims, complementary in their functions, continuous in their purpose, indispensable in their value to mankind. . . .

Those who have recognized the Light of God in this age claim no finality for the Revelation with which they stand identified, nor arrogate to the Faith they have embraced powers and attributes intrinsically superior to, or essentially different from, those which have characterized any of the religious systems that preceded it. . . .

Who, contemplating the helplessness, the fears and miseries of humanity in this day, can any longer question the necessity for a fresh revelation of the quickening power of God's redemptive love and guidance? Who . . . can be so blind as to doubt that the hour has at last struck for the advent of a new Revelation, for a restatement of the Divine Purpose, and for the consequent revival of those spiritual forces that have, at fixed intervals, rehabilitated the fortunes of human society? Does not the very operation of the world-unifying forces that are at work in this age necessitate that He Who is the Bearer of the Message of God in this day should not only reaffirm that self-same exalted standard of individual conduct inculcated by the Prophets gone before Him, but embody in His appeal, to all governments and peoples, the essentials of that social code, that Divine Economy, which must guide humanity's concerted efforts in establishing that all-embracing federation which is to signalize the advent of the Kingdom of God on this earth? . . .

Alone of all the Revelations gone before it this Faith has . . . succeeded in raising a structure which the bewildered followers of bankrupt and broken creeds might well approach and critically examine, and seek, ere it is too late, the invulnerable security of its world-embracing shelter. . . .

To what else if not to the power and majesty which this Administrative Order—the rudiments of the future all-enfolding Bahá'í Commonwealth —is destined to manifest, can these utterances of Bahá'u'lláh allude: *"The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System—the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed."* . . .

THE Bahá'í Commonwealth of the future, of which this vast Administrative Order is the sole framework, is, both in theory and practice, not only unique in the entire history of political institutions, but can find no parallel in the annals of any of the world's recognized religious systems. No form of democratic government; no system of autocracy or of dictatorship, whether monarchical or republican; no intermediary scheme of a purely aristocratic order; nor even any of the recognized types of theocracy, whether it be the Hebrew Commonwealth, or the various Christian ecclesiastical organizations, or the Imamate or the Caliphate in Islám—none of these can be identified or said to conform with the Administrative Order which the master-hand of its perfect Architect has fashioned. . . .

Let no one, while this System is still in its infancy, belittle its significance or misrepresent its purpose. The bedrock on which this Administrative Order is founded is God's immutable Purpose for mankind in this day. The Source from which it derives its inspiration is no one less than Bahá'u'lláh Himself. . . . The central, the underlying aim which animates it is the establishment of the New World Order as adumbrated by Bahá'u'lláh. The methods it employs, the standard it inculcates, incline it to neither East nor West, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither rich nor poor, neither white nor colored. Its watchword is the unification of the human race; its standard the "Most Great Peace" . . .

The contrast between the accumulating evidences of steady consolidation that accompany the rise of the Administrative Order of the Faith of God, and the forces of disintegration which batter at the fabric of a travailing society, is as clear as it is arresting. Both within and outside the Bahá'í world the signs and tokens which, in a mysterious manner, are heralding the birth of that World Order, the establishment of which must signalize the Golden Age of the Cause of God, are growing and multiplying day by day. . . .

"*Soon,*" Bahá'u'lláh's own words proclaim it, "*will the present-day Order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead.*" . . .

THE Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh . . . should . . . be regarded as signalizing through its advent the *coming of age of the entire human race.* It should be viewed not merely as yet another spiritual revival in the ever-changing fortunes of mankind, not only as a further stage in a chain of progressive Revelations, nor even as the culmination of one of a series of recurrent prophetic cycles, but rather as marking the last and highest stage in the stupendous evolution of man's collective life on this planet. The emergence of a world community, the consciousness of world citizenship, the founding of a world civilization and culture . . . should . . . be regarded, as far as this planetary life is concerned, as the furthermost limits in the organization of human society, though man, as an individual, will, nay must indeed as a result of such a consummation, continue indefinitely to progress and develop. . . .

Excerpts from "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh."

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

G. A. SHOOK

THERE is a language of the spirit and the heart, 'Abdu'l-Bahá informs us. "It is the language of the spirit which speaks to God. When, in prayer, we are freed from all outward things and turn to God, then it is as if in our hearts we hear the voice of God." "Know thou, verily, it is becoming in a weak one to supplicate to the Strong One, and it behooveth a seeker of bounty to beseech the Glorious Bountiful One. When one supplicates to his Lord, turns to Him and seeks bounty from His Ocean, this supplication brings light to his heart, illumination to his sight, life to his soul and exaltation to his being."[1]

Every great religion has touched the heart of man, God does not want our possessions but He does require the heart. Christ made this clear when He declared that our love for God should come first and Bahá'u'lláh says, "Give a hearing ear, O people, to that which I, in truth, say unto you. The one true God, exalted be His glory, hath ever regarded, and will continue to regard, the hearts of men as His own, His exclusive possession."[2]

Revelation, and revelation alone, brings that approach to God for which men have always been striving. We attempt such an approach through science or philosophy or experience but with comparatively little success. Science is a description of a more or less concrete world—its modes of expression are derived from and adopted to a world of matter and energy. A description of religion that starts with science may never rise above science. Again, if we start with the mind of man as Descartes and the ontologinists did, we may end with the mind. Finally, if we base religion upon individual experience we may never get beyond experience.

That inner certainty, spiritual confirmation or awareness of our love for God and His love, care and protection for us, is essential to all religious movements. But while this kind of inner knowledge is necessary, it is not sufficient. There must be some expression of this conviction. Spiritual experience, like emotion, will not endure without expression. Without expression experience has no objective validity.

But there is still one step beyond this; there must be some rational basis for this expression. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá was asked how spiritual attachment could be made, He replied, "Knowledge is love. Study, listen to exhortations, think, try to understand the wisdom and greatness of God."[3] As we try to understand God and our relation to Him and His divine messengers, our attachment to Him in-

1—Bahá'u'lláh and The New Era, p. 111, 115.

2—Gleanings, p. 206.

3—Divine Art of Living, p. 53.

creases. Moreover this kind of knowledge is necessary to clarify our modes of expression. While we naturally recoil from the word "dogma," yet in the past, religious dogmas were necessary to clarify certain ideas about God, the world, and the problem of evil.

Christianity, unlike Buddhism, gave to the world religious truth without a metaphysics. The words of Christ are powerful because they are derived from spiritual insight. Christ revealed great spiritual laws but no metaphysics. His message was spiritual. Why He gave this particular kind of message is not a matter for speculation. If His message was a revelation of the Divine Will, it is certainly beyond criticism. The fact is He did not leave a system of philosophy nor an administrative order for the founding of a church. These were added by the early church as occasion required.

While there have been periods when dogma was over-emphasized, at its highest points the church never has lost sight of the fact that there are religious truths beyond formularization. The end of all dialectics, of course, must be the enhancement of spiritual life.

MEANS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Three things seem essential for our spiritual development.

1. First, there is that knowledge of God which comes through this language of the spirit. Such knowledge is possible through the great Prophets like Christ, Muhammad, or Bahá'u'lláh.

Moreover this kind of knowledge seems to be greatest or at least more accessible at the time of the appearance of a great Prophet. Bahá'u'lláh, commenting upon the principle that every created thing has been entrusted ". . . with a sign of His knowledge" which is the "mirror of His beauty in the world of creation,"[4] assures us that man can, through his own efforts, cleanse this mirror from earthly defilements and purge it from satanic fancies. But He adds, "In pursuance, however, of the principle that for every thing a time hath been fixed, and for every fruit a season hath been ordained, the latent energies of such a bounty can best be released, and the vernal glory of such a gift can only be manifested, in the Days of God. Invested though each day may be with its pre-ordained share of God's wondrous grace, the Days immediately associated with the Manifestation of God possess a unique distinction and occupy a station which no mind can ever comprehend."[5]

To the early Christians the knowledge of Christ was the knowledge of God and to all of them the life of Christ was a very vivid, stirring, historical fact. We must know God, therefore, in the sense of being acquainted with Him through love, devotion, and adoration. "That which beseemeth you is the love of God, and the love of Him Who is the Manifestation of His Essence, and the observance of whatsoever He chooseth to prescribe unto you, did ye but know it."[6]

The realization of this spiritual growth cannot always be expressed in words for religion belongs to the realm of value and this kind of knowledge is more akin to love than to the knowledge of the physical universe.

4—Gleanings, p. 262.

5—Ibid., p. 262.

6—Ibid., p. 304.

2. But there must be some expression of faith, the mere experience of religious emotion is no guarantee of its validity or of its potency. To be sure, a particular individual might have religious feelings without expression, but certainly there can be no common Faith in a group without some mode of expression and this expression usually takes the form of prayers, supplications, affirmations or ritual. Ritual as a form of expression has always been effective in drawing people together into a common fellowship. The ritual itself need not be elaborate nor spectacular and it can be entirely free from superstition, as in the case of a simple celebration of some vivid historical event associated with the Faith and revered by all the participants. Social life is more conducive to normal spiritual growth than solitariness, for in fellowship we learn from others and that which is persistently expressed is usually the most potent.

Religious experience and expression are both essential to spiritual growth. While we may not be able to convey every experience in words, the basis for the experience can be expressed, and explicitly expressed. To illustrate, in every Faith men have received inspiration from reading the revealed Word. One may not be able to transmit to another the individual experience that results from this reading, but there is a basis for this experience and it is expressed concretely by Bahá'u'lláh in the following words: "Whoso reciteth, in the privacy of his chamber, the verses revealed by God, the scattering angels of the Almighty shall scatter abroad the fragrance of the words uttered by his mouth, and shall cause the heart of every righteous man to throb. Though he may, at first, remain unaware of its effect, yet the virtue of the grace vouchsafed unto him must needs sooner or later exercise its influence upon his soul."[7]

When such words are read in a group every member can profit by them for they express a Divine law that is universal, but when an individual expresses his own personal experience or conviction, in a group, the influence of his words is necessarily limited.

3. "And as the human heart, as fashioned by God, is one and undivided, it behooveth thee to take heed that its affections be, also, one and undivided."[8] The heart must be attached to an infinite reality but we must be sure that this object of our devotions is the eternal living God and not an idol of our own creation. Not only is it necessary then to have some rational basis for our belief but as we clarify our ideas about God and His relation to man, our spiritual perception is increased. Commenting upon certain fundamental truths of the Faith, the Guardian says, "These verities, if valiantly upheld and properly assimilated, will, I am convinced, powerfully reinforce the vigor of our spiritual life. . . ."[9] Therefore we should have some understanding of the Manifestation of God as the Creator of our spiritual life and the Educator of humanity. We should have some knowledge of God's relation to man, His relation to the great Prophets, and Their relation to man.

While the Day of every Prophet is the time of spiritual rebirth, in this

7—Ibid., p. 295.

8—Ibid., p. 237.

9—The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 7.

day a fuller measure of Divine Bounty is possible. Bahá'u'lláh made it clear that the message of which He is the Bearer is superior to all the Revelations of the past because the world is more mature. Any Prophet in the past could have revealed the same message —they were not limited, but the scope of their message and the modes of their expressions were limited to the capacity of the people to whom they came. Today we have a more comprehensive revelation for humanity; humanity is now ready for a Divine Philosophy.

THE FULFILLMENT OF PROMISES

In the past religious dogmas concerning our relation to God and to His Messengers were kept alive by dialectic developments. Criticism was considered necessary to prevent stagnation. While the church made certain pronouncements, which were considered valid for all time, there was always room for a difference of opinion in its philosophy; criticism of philosophy was possible and desirable.

During His lifetime, Bahá'u'lláh appointed His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as the Expounder of His Word and moreover provided for a succession in the Institution of the Guardianship. Now the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh cover about every phase of human life and moreover the Guardians, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's provision, have the exclusive right to interpret His Word. One has but to recall the potency of the Imamate to visualize the stupendous significance of this provision. A metaphysics seems superfluous.

Far from becoming static, the Faith will have a continuous source of inspiration. That is, religious Faith today is not to be kept alive by constant reexamination and criticism of fundamental tenets, but rather by a profound study of the revealed Word of the Founder and the divinely inspired interpretation, which is in itself, so far as validity goes, not intrinsically different nor separate from the Revelation.

In all vital religions what we formulate always falls short of what we know. The mystical experience cannot be expressed in words, nevertheless life is enhanced. But we must remember that as we recede from the high points of the great historical religions, spiritual growth becomes more difficult for the generality of mankind. What we express in words, then, is in excess of what we know. Only a few gifted souls retain a vision of a personal God. Today, a great deal is said about God but few make any claim to know God except as an abstraction.

So great has been this longing for the knowledge of God, that superior individuals, a few at least, have always been willing to sacrifice all they possessed to attain a small measure of it. But in the dark night of religion the way is not so easy to find and many have followed false paths and of these some have failed to recognize the right path when day replaced night.

Some authoritative knowledge about God and His relation to man is therefore necessary.

Down through the ages promises have been made but this is the Day

of Fulfillment. Man will not have to wander any longer in a spiritual wilderness; Bahá'u'lláh brought those divine laws which are a basis for our spiritual growth—we do not have to wait for fallible man to develop a metaphysics for us.

THE DAY OF GOD

A long view of religion shows that revelation is progressive, religions rise and fall like the seasons. Summer follows the spring and autumn follows the summer but winter always follows autumn. It is reasonable to assume that a new revelation will contrast sharply with contemporary thought even as the spring differs markedly from the winter. In a sense, the Day of God is a Day of Judgment not only to the unrighteous but to the righteous who feel that they have attained some degree of spiritual knowledge. It is not so difficult to convince the thoroughly bad that they are the people of error but those who, according to human standards, are above reproach are not readily turned to the source of Divine Knowledge. Christ made His position clear in no uncertain terms and He did not spare those who should have recognized and sponsored His Cause.

There is one human weakness that we do not overcome when we have succeeded in suppressing the lower nature. This is our spiritual pride. In the beginning of every Revelation men of superior character, even those possessing some spiritual insight, are often so blinded by their own attainments that they fail to differentiate the real from the phenomenal. While people of lesser attainments through humility and a desire for the higher life often attain great spiritual heights. Those who make the greatest spiritual progress in the Day of God are those who have substituted the knowledge of the Prophets for their own limited understanding."[10]

Bahá'u'lláh as well as every Prophet that has preceded Him has made it clear that real progress is made only by turning to the Prophet. Good acts, while necessary, are by no means sufficient.[11]

One of the first duties of the Prophet, then, is to show humanity that the old must be replaced by the new; the old philosophy and the old modes of expression. Finally, religious experience must be interpreted in terms of the new life. What we have confidently called the Voice of God, may not be the Voice of God. This is logical but sometimes very difficult to accept.

To be severed from acquired learning and especially the so-called "inner knowledge," is more difficult than to be severed from the world, so that in the Day of God spiritual discipline involves more than just detachment from worldly goods and desires.

First of all, we must realize that God is independent of us while we are in no sense independent of God. No acts of ours, however meritorious, are sufficient for the fullest spiritual development unless we realize our relation to God. "Blessed is the man that hath acknowledged his belief in God and in His signs, and recognized that 'He shall not be asked of His doings.' Such a recognition hath been made by God the ornament of every belief, and its very foundation. Upon

10—Gleanings, p. 263.

11—Ibid., p. 330.

it must depend the acceptance of every goodly deed."[12] Furthermore, the acknowledgment of our inability to understand the nature of God is no indication of spiritual ignorance. Rather, Bahá'u'lláh reminds us, "This confession of helplessness which mature contemplation must eventually impel every mind to make is in itself the acme of human understanding, and marketh the culmination of man's development."[13]

This fundamental doctrine is upheld by every great Prophet and, to a small degree, by every creative genius. Where would the world of art be today if every master had to submit his creation to the judgment of the world for its approval? The child Mozart knew that he had a contribution to make and he did not seek the approval of his contemporaries. Hayden, the early teacher of Mozart, eventually learned more from him than he ever taught him.

GOD'S WAYS

To put ourselves in a position to receive pleasurable emotions may not, in itself, lead to spiritual progress. The height we attained yesterday may convince us that such heights are possible, but we must reach forward and not backward. The task of today may lead to unfamiliar surroundings; all our plans may be frustrated and our ordered life may be interrupted. For the moment we may feel depressed and discouraged but this does not mean, necessarily, that we are retrograding. Inward joy is essential to individual development but it must be a result of obeying Divine Laws and not the goal of life.

When the world is so corrupt that it needs a Divine Revelation, very few are worthy of any Divine Bounty. The soul must realize its unfitness to receive the Divine Bounty and this is accomplished through tests. The natural tendency of man is to preserve his own well-being, whether it be on a high or a low plane, but he has discovered, down through the ages, that God's ways are not always man's ways. We strive to live under conditions which we believe are conducive to spiritual growth, but should we always succeed we might never learn the value of acquiescence and so a diviner wisdom sometimes decrees that we live under adverse conditions.

The confident heart who has been upon the mountain top knows that there is a mountain top and presses forward. The faith, heroism, and devotion displayed by the early believers of the Bahá'í Faith, as portrayed in Nabil's Narrative, are unparalleled in the annals of religious history. The deeds of these apostles of God, so close to our own day, have been and will continue to be a source of inspiration and courage, for they demonstrate that real spiritual joy comes to those who sacrifice their will and desires for the Divine Will.

The Day of God is a day of spiritual discipline.

12—Ibid., p. 86.

13—Ibid., p. 165.

IS THERE DIVISION OF RACE?

Answers to Questions

BERTHA HYDE KIRKPATRICK

RACIAL antagonism is not new. Says Professor E. A. Hooton of Harvard University: "From immemorial antiquity hereditary variations of bodily form have been made the basis of charges of racial inferiority in mentality and in capacity for civilization."[1]

But today when these charges are assuming such proportions as to threaten the very disruption of nations and continents it is well to pause and investigate lest we allow ourselves to be ruled by prejudice instead of truth. The prophets of God and scientific investigation are the two great sources of truth. What do the Prophets teach? What does science teach?

The Prophets have always taught the worth of the individual regardless of nation or race. The followers of Muhammad have been notable for obeying His teaching in this matter. Christians, alas, have strayed far from Christ's teachings. Bahá'u'lláh, God's latest Messenger and His Mouthpiece for today, is explicit. The Oneness of Mankind is the pivot around which all His teachings revolve. "In this century," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá when explaining the teachings in this country, "His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has proclaimed the reality of the oneness of the world of humanity and announced that all nations, peoples and races are one. He has shown that although individuals may differ in development and capacity, they are essentially and intrinsically equal as human beings, just as the waves of the sea are innumerable and different but the reality of the sea is one."

This is the position the scientists also take, in the main, though they differ among themselves on minor points. Knowing that scientific research and discovery is never at an end the scientist speaks cautiously. The Prophet knows intuitively and speaks with authority; the scientist must search out truth step by step. So we find the American Anthropological Association making this guarded statement: "Anthropology provides no scientific basis for discrimination against any people on the ground of racial inferiority, religious affiliation or linguistic heritage."[2]

But humanity as a whole does not yet accept this thesis of the fundamental Oneness of Mankind. It is, I think, not an overstatement to say that today the majority of people believe that the term "race" has a definite meaning; that there are pure races; that some races are intrinsically superior to others; that racial intermar-

1—Quoted in *We Americans*, p. 25, The Atlantic Monthly Co.

2—*We Americans*, p. 33.

riage produces inferior offspring. Neither religion or science supports these views.

Since in this day some are influenced more by what science says than by what the Prophet of God says let us look briefly at what scientists report in regard to this intricate race question as well as note more fully the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh. In regard to the meaning of the word "race" we are told that "no one has ever defined the word 'race' to the satisfaction of the whole world."[3] I understand this to mean that scientists cannot agree upon any basis for classifying the human race into divisions, though color is often used as a convenient basis for classification. In the words of one writer: "Though these authorities may differ among themselves they may be said to agree on the existence of only one real and undeniable race—the human race."[4]

We find the scientists quite agreed, too, that there is no such thing as a pure race (using the word in its commonly accepted meaning) unless possibly in a few isolated places. "The present races of men," we are told, "have intermingled and interbred for many thousands of years so that their geneological lines have become inextricably confused."[5]

The question of racial superiority is the most disputed one. It is true that some groups have not yet advanced so far in civilization as others, but scholars find other reasons than racial differences for this. Here again we find a cautious statement by the scientist: "Anthropologists have formed as yet no relationship between any physical criterion of race and mental capacity, whether in individuals or in groups."[6] When we base our judgments of inferiority or superiority on so-called racial or physical differences we are bound to err and sink into race prejudice. In regard to the matter of backward groups 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written: "The point is this, that some people are sick, some are immature and ignorant, and some without any knowledge of their beginning and their end. The sick should be cured, the immature should be brought to maturity, and the ignorant should be taught to be wise—and it is not that enmity should be exercised toward them."

And finally when we ask what science teaches in regard to inter-racial marriage Professor Hooton says: "The study of the results of hybridization between the most physically diverse of modern races—such as the Negro and the Nordic—has not demonstrated that fertility is decreased, or vitality diminished, by such cross-breedings."[7]

When we find science answering "no" to these four beliefs which have been so long cherished as truths, and religion reiterating that the human family is one we are forced to acknowledge that our racial antipathies are due to prejudice. Events of today should warn us that it is a very dangerous prejudice so that we may exert ourselves to the utmost to wipe it out. Scientists, educators and religionists are exerting themselves to spread the truth through publications, organizations and radio broadcasts. But a greater power than scientific education is necessary to thoroughly eradicate long-standing and deep-seated

3—Idem, p. 19.

4—Idem, p. 19.

5—Quoted from Dr. Hooton in *We Americans*, p. 27.

6—Idem, p. 26.

7—Idem, p. 27.

prejudice. It is the words of the Prophet of God which arouse our higher nature, cause us to put away childish beliefs and develop in us a desire that all mankind shall have mercy and justice. Bahá'u'lláh says, "Verily, the Words which have descended from the heaven of the will of God are the source of unity and harmony for the world. Close your eyes to racial differences and welcome all with the light of oneness." Such words as these remain in our minds and stimulate our thoughts.

The Prophet appeals to our reason as well as to our highest emotions. 'Abdu'l-Bahá points out how irrational it is to stress one or two points of difference when men have so many points in common. In Chicago during a talk given to a group of colored and white people He said, "In physical bodies, in the law of growth, sense endowment, intelligence, patriotism, language, citizenship and religion you are one and the same. A single point of distinction exists, that of racial color. God is not pleased with, nor should any reasonable and intelligent man be willing to recognize, inequality in the races because of this distinction."

On other occasions He appealed to us to recognize the real value in differences of color and features, language and cultural habits since they give us the beauty and pleasantness of diversity instead of the monotony of likeness. "Difference of race," He says, "is like the variegated beauty of flowers in a garden." Often we delight in productions of art, music and poetry of those of other race, why should we not delight in those who produce them? Indeed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá has said that not only is there beauty in the variety of race color but that "multiplicity of color is an emblem of the power of the Merciful."

But most important of all—it is only through applying the principle of the Oneness of Humanity that peace and rest can come to the world. "The most urgent requisite of mankind is the declaration of the oneness of the world of humanity—this is the great principle of Bahá'u'lláh," says 'Abdu'l-Bahá. And further He says, "The principle of the oneness of humanity must be proclaimed, understood and put in practice, so that all the nations and religions may again remember the long-forgotten fact that they are all the progeny of primordial humanity, Adam, and the denizens of one land."

TRUE LIBERTY

IDA JUDITH BAUM

WHILE reading through the "Gleanings," my attention was arrested by the excerpt on true liberty as given by the great teacher, Bahá-'u'lláh. Surely if we would abide by these quotations our lives would be blessed with our rightful heritage of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. "If the learned and worldly-wise men of this age were to allow mankind to inhale the fragrance of fellowship and love, every understanding heart would apprehend the meaning of true liberty, and discover the secret of undisturbed peace and absolute composure." Liberty, then, is freedom from the materialistic bonds of everyday life.

Liberty, according to the conception of the finite mind, often leads to pitfalls and sedition. Only when man tunes in to that liberty which abides in truth, does he live in harmony with God and his fellow beings. "Men, in their foolish ways, tend to desire those things which are injurious to them and discard those that would be of benefit." Therefore, they are in need of guidance and that guidance is knowledge that every flock must have its shepherd.

Bahá'u'lláh—the shepherd for the present age—wrote: "True liberty consisteth in man's submission unto My commandments, little as ye know it. Were men to observe that which We have sent down unto them from the Heaven of Revelation, they would, of a certainty, attain unto perfect liberty. The liberty that profiteth you is to be found nowhere except in complete servitude unto God, the Eternal Truth. Whoso hath tasted of its sweetness will refuse to barter it for all the dominion of earth and heaven."

God, in His love and compassion for us, created us that we might enjoy the best of His bounties, to reap the fullest of harvests and to enjoy all good pleasures, but how can man attain this? This can only be realized through the knowledge of God's Teachings. One of the bounties given to us is liberty and to follow liberty we must know that it is only when we walk in God's path that we attain this. This liberty means freedom, life. Freedom which is the cutting loose from material and temporal things. It means to be unfettered from the prison of self, from the garment of selfishness, envy and greed. It means life, the freedom of life, the freedom to breathe of the pure fragrances of God's domain. To live above the envy of our neighbors, to live above antagonism and false accusation.

In His creative plan for mankind, the Creator endowed the soul of man

with two aspects—one material, and one spiritual. Through the power of free-will—also God-given—man has his choice which road to follow. If one follows the spiritual pathway, surely one's reward will be *true* liberty. But if he subordinates his will to animal impulses, naturally he falls into licentiousness. Does it not behoove him to follow the spiritual, for is it not this—the dividing line—that raises him up above the animal into the kingdom of the "true man?"

In order for us as individuals, whether as private citizens or officials, to serve our countries as true and loyal citizens, we must grow into the idea of allegiance to true liberty.

The time is coming when mankind will be raised to its proper level. Bitter partisanship, political racketeers, private rings of scheming gangsters—these will be washed out by the clean, incoming tide of true liberty, and government will function on the level of a spiritualized democracy.

In conclusion, I shall again quote from Bahá'u'lláh: "Consider for intance such things as liberty, civilization and the like. However much men of understanding may favorably regard them, they will, if carried to excess, exercise a pernicious influence upon men. . . Please God, the peoples of the world may be led, as the result of the high endeavors exerted by their rulers and the wise and learned amongst men, to recognize their best interests. How long will humanity persist in its waywardness? How long will injustice continue? How long is chaos and confusion to reign amongst men? How long will discord agitate the face of society? The winds of despair are, alas, blowing from every direction, and the strife that divideth and afflicteth the human race is daily increasing. The signs of impending convulsion and chaos can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing order appeareth to be lamentably defective. I beseech God, exalted be His glory, that He may graciously awaken the peoples of the earth, may grant that the end of their conduct may be profitable unto them, and aid them to accomplish that which beseemeth their station."

Let us now stop for a moment and put a mirror on the world as it is today. Do we see a reflection of humanity working in accord with true liberty? No! We see the mirror depicting licentiousness in its ugliest degree. We see humanity and civilization in its lowest tide of spiritual degeneracy. Man fighting against his fellow man, gorilla fashion, denouncing all which is divine in us, renouncing our highest ideals and under the surveillance of greedy, non-conforming, insane oppressors. The pendulum has swung too far and lost its tempo. The world's equilibrium has been upset—revolutioned by the "vibrating influence of a New World Order."

Praise be to Him, the mirror of the world will in time reflect a real and harmonious civilization, clothed in the robe of liberty. Therefore, it is our holy duty and responsibility to safeguard the laws of liberty that we may serve sacredly our nation, our fellowmen and ourselves.

IN THE MIRROR OF CREATION

OLIVIA KELSEY

ONE day in a remote age some cells among the mass long separated took on the characteristics of remaining attached together, after division, or combining. That was the beginning of social organism. From this nucleus higher celled animals could be developed. Progress was on the wing! And with increase of this cooperative power came power to increase the complexity of organization of cell masses. Adherence to united action for survival has been instinctive among men and animals from that time until this New Day when a new motif was introduced. An impulse for unity patterned from spiritual principles and sustained by Justice in human life and reverberated by man throughout the body of the world. "The world, by means of the graces of thought and wisdom," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "hath been adorned with a new Revelation and distinguished by an excellent new gift."[1]

"The French scientist, Espinas who wrote 'Des Sociétés Animales,' (1878) which was the pioneering essay in this field so far as modern work is concerned," says W. C. Allee, Professor of Zoology, University of Chicago "affirms that no living being is solitary, but that from the lowest to the highest each is normally immersed in some sort of social life, a fact which he proclaimed sixty years ago and added that he was ready to offer conclusive proof. He has massed evidence that communal life is not 'a restricted accidental condition found among such privileged species as bees, ants, beavers and men, but is in fact, universal.' "[2]

This principle (cooperation and reciprocal aid), Professor Allee goes on to say, is fundamental in nature and "Empedocles, Greek philosopher who lived in the fifth century B. C. seems to have had the first recorded glimmerings of this law. He outlined the idea (in two long poems) that there are natural elements: fire, earth, air and water which are acted upon by the combining power of love and the disrupting power of hate. Under the guidance of the building force of love the separate elements came together and formed the world. Separate parts of plants and various unassorted pieces of animals arose from the earth. These, Empedocles taught, were often combined and at first the results were monstrous shapes, which in time became straightened around until, still guided by combining love, they clicked, to make the more perfect animals we now know. It has taken us almost two and a half millennia to transmute this poetic conception into the less picturesque but more exact

1—Mysterious Forces of Civilization, p. 5.

2—The Social Life of Animals, p. 25-26.

and workable expression acceptable to modern science."[3]

In the Bahá'í teachings this force which binds together and creates form is called soul; in its negative aspect it is disintegrative. In the mineral kingdom where its positive aspect first appears it is described as cohesive power; in the vegetable kingdom (manifesting in greater degree) it is called "virtue augmentative"; in the animal kingdom (advancing in potency) it appears as the animal (senses) and in the human kingdom (released in greater effulgence) it manifests as moral force. The Human Reality (Soul) partakes of both physical and spiritual life, because of a unique mission, and its health depends upon its equilibrium between these two realms. When functioning properly the Human Reality acts as a transmitting agent, receiving spiritual energy which it in turn reflects into the moral and physical worlds. An interruption of this interaction, or relationship, is disruptive in effect and unless remedied chaos would ensue.

We become indifferent, through spiritual impotence, to the fact that there are other beings and worlds, of no significance to us because of our incapacity to appreciate them, but of concern to the Almighty, since it appears that He took considerable pains to create them; and they are co-partner with each other and with us even as neighbors and nations are component parts of our own world organism—in a still vaster unity. How can we realize these universal bonds if our precious lives are devoted to purely selfish interests? But they cannot be ignored and the Prophets have made it their immediate task to restore the sublime attributes of the Soul so that it may partake of this larger life. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has reaffirmed it in these words: "All existing beings, terrestrial and celestial, as well as this limitless space and all that is in it, have been created, organized, composed, arranged and perfected as they ought to be. . . . All beings are connected together like a chain and reciprocal help, assistance and influence belonging to the properties of things are the causes of the existence, development and growth of created beings. It is confirmed through evidences and proofs that every being universally acts upon other beings, either absolutely or through association."[4]

The law of reciprocity, therefore, acts through all the worlds—purpose, intelligence, tolerance, sacrifice; by these the kingdoms are sustained; by tolerance social life is possible among the animals and they are made responsive to conscious cooperation! In the human kingdom the soul qualities are expanded further still and the pattern tested in family and tribal life in animal existence is applied first to national and then to international organization. Man's position in the heart of the universal organism is and has ever been a responsible one. His passage through the various worlds was not intended as a pleasure trip but as a holy mission. As he progresses spiritually, his knowledge deepened, his awareness of a greater challenge increased, the problems presented to him will correspond with soul maturity. His capacity, however, for steadfastness, reverence, courage, faith, love, humility, utter self-abneg-

3—Idem, p. 23.

4—Some Answered Questions, p. 205-8.

ation and self-surrender and realization of utter helplessness except for the bestowals of the Almighty Creator will clearly indicate his position as above and apart from the narrow world of nature. How great will be the release of potentialities, in these lesser kingdoms through this beneficent influence of Man!

In preparation for the spiritualization of the powers we use as we pass along we should know that the Human Reality is a creation functioning through many facets; one is a point of contact with the natural world, the senses and animal aspect of man; another is the intellect reaching into the world of abstraction; another is contact with spiritual realms through inspiration, exalted feelings and true religious fervor. A normal human soul should function through all channels. The most potent and essential, however, is the bond with the spiritual world. Cut off from this source of vitality the Soul grows warped and miserable. Human educators, limited in vision and comprehension of the Soul's proportions are not able to develop great Souls. But the lessons, precepts, principles and laws prescribed by the Prophets release from the springs of the Soul imperishable qualities and guard them for eternal life. Through science the intellectual facet of the Soul was enabled to penetrate the world of nature and unmask some of the wonders hidden there, but for the human will to wisely apply that knowledge gained, it must needs be tempered with merciful susceptibilities and made conscious of inviolable responsibilities.

"Ego-centric man, so powerful in shaping the things of earth to his own ends, needs to be reminded occasionally of his role in space and time," says Dr. Riddle.[5]

"If in an Arabian Night's excursion we might leave this earth and look at the present living world from afar, say, from 24,000 miles, which is one-tenth of the distance to the moon—we could rightly sense the narrow pinions of life. Then on the great sphere which would nearly fill our view to east or west, we should see all life imprisoned in a thin film—a living skin—tightly fitted to the very surface of the earth. . . . The drama of life is performed in a restricted zone."

We should realize that as the narrow arena of physical life has a protecting garment, likewise the souls of the beings are shielded by a protecting mantle—the Love of God, revealed to souls according to capacity and condition. So in the human world it is manifest as Man, Prophet, Messiah, Lord. Through His knowledge and power moralities are rekindled, knowledge expanded, the human will trained and exalted and, as a consequence, a new order created. The force which has held together the component parts of the organism is displaced when the relationships are violated and corruption enters the organism. Then, human leaders, uninspired, are free to introduce patterns they have found in the imperfect world of nature, and gradually as spiritual life declines, the line between the natural world and the world of moralities dissolves and the soul succumbs to its unregenerate impulses. They are animal characteristics latent

5—Science News Letter, January 31, 1939, p. 37.

in the soul and in the sphere of the animal are not abnormal. Not that the world of nature is a trifling creation. Nature has fulfilled its promise though unconscious. The animal in his sphere is graceful and dignified and his ferocity and savagery are lawful. From the storehouses of nature the mind of man has wrought many material civilizations — yet its resources are, as yet, scarcely tapped. The capacity of the humble peanut, as revealed by the renowned scientist, Dr. Carver, is still unplumbed! There are eight hundred thousand known species of insects in the animal realm. Of these, so far, only two have been domesticated—the silkworm and the honey bee. But what contributions to human life and society! There is today a range of intelligence and feeling shown in the animal world which is scarcely paralleled in great masses of human kind. A little kitten, weak from hunger and thirst, broken by maltreatment, will pause before proffered food and with unmistakable signs and expressions make known its gratitude to its deliverer! How much more humility and gratitude should Man, the recipient of the greater share of God's love, exemplify.

"What are the animal propensities?" 'Abdu'l-Bahá asks: "To eat, drink, wander about and sleep. The thoughts, the minds of the animals are confined to these. They are captive in the bonds of these desires. Man becomes a slave to them when his ultimate desire is no higher than his welfare in this world of the senses. . . . If the life of man be confined to this physical, material outlook the animal's life is a hundred times better, easier and more productive of comfort and contentment. The animal is nobler, more serene and confident because each hour is free from anxiety and worriment."[6] And further He points out "No matter how much man gains wealth, riches and opulence in this world he will not become as independent as a cow. For these fattened cows roam freely over the vast tableland. All the prairies and meadows are theirs for grazing and all the springs and rivers are theirs for drinking! . . . It is evident that they have earned these material bounties with the utmost facility. . . . Thus it becomes evident that in the matters of this world, however much man may strive and work to the point of death, he will be unable to earn the abundance, the freedom and independent life of a small bird. This proves and establishes the fact that man is not created for the life of this ephemeral world."[7]

But what then is man? "The answer is," says Epictetus, Greek stoic philosopher who lived as a slave in Rome and thus had excellent reason for analyzing the conundrum, "a rational and mortal soul. Then by rational faculty from whom are we separated? From wild beasts. . . . Take care, then, to do nothing like a wild beast; but if you do you have lost the character of man; you have not fulfilled your promise. See that you do nothing like mere animals. . . . When then do we act as mere animals? When we act gluttonously, when we act lewdly, when we act rashly, filthily, inconsiderately. To what have we declined? To animals. What have we lost? The rational fac-

6—Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 179-180.

7—America's Spiritual Mission, p. 15.

ulty. When we act contentiously and harmfully and passionately and violently, to what have we declined? To wild beasts. Consequently, some of us are great wild beasts and others little beasts of bad dispositions and habits. These two things are mingled in the generation of man, body in common with the animals and reason and intelligence in common with the immortals."

To recapitulate: If the innumerable universes, peopled with innumerable beings, each with an assigned task and destiny, are vitalized and preserved each in his own organism and related to each other through a greater organism and purpose; and if they subsist and develop when the channels uniting them are maintained in perfect order—unconsciously on the part of certain beings, consciously on the part of others; and if the heart and core of that pattern is Man, what would be the consequences of neglect of responsibility—of sheer willfulness on the part of that mighty member of so great an organism?

Again look into the world of nature and by comparison draw conclusion: Prof. Forbes of the Illinois Biological Survey pointed out[8] "that minnows competed with bladderwort plants for key-industry organisms and showed that when a black bass is hooked and taken from the water the triumphant fisherman is breaking, unsensed by him, myriads of meshes which have bound the fish to all of the different forms of lake life."

And 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in an address at Leland Stanford Junior University in 1912 said: "Verily the origin of all material life is one and its termination likewise one. In view of this fundamental unity and agreement of all phenomenal life, why should man in his kingdom of existence wage war or indulge in hostility and destructive strife against his fellowman? . . . *From the fellowship and commingling of elemental atoms life results. . . A slight disturbance and discord among them might bring another San Francisco earthquake and fire. A physical clash, a little quarreling among the elements as it were and a violent cataclysm of nature results. This happens in the mineral kingdom. Consider then the effect of discord and conflict in the kingdom of man. How great the attendant catastrophe!*"[9]

It is necessary, in the spiritual evolution of man, that he should know himself and his limitations. And so, through a portion of free will, he has been permitted to experiment. The result in world-wide chaos and misery proves that man is indeed in need of the protecting mantle of God's Love, which in its most beneficial, remedial form is Law. "Consider the pettiness of men's minds" says Bahá'u'lláh,[10] "They ask for that which injureth them, and cast away the thing that profiteth them. They are, indeed, of those that are far astray. We find some men desiring liberty, and priding themselves therein. Such men are in the depths of ignorance. Liberty must, in the end, lead to sedition, whose flames none can quench. Thus warneth you He Who is the Reckoner, the All-Knowing. Know ye that the embodiment of liberty and its symbol is the animal! That which beseemeth man is submission unto such restraints as will protect him from his own ig-

8—The Social Life of Animals, p. 40.

9—Promulgation of Universal Peace.

10—Gleanings, p. 335-336.

norance, and guard him against the harm of the mischief-maker. Liberty causeth man to overstep the bounds of propriety, and to infringe on the dignity of his station. It debaseth him to the level of extreme depravity and wickedness. Regard men as a flock of sheep that need a shepherd for their protection. . . ."

Studying the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh we find His theme is that great fundamental law of unity and reciprocity. He has given regenerative principles to liberate new soul qualities — "merciful susceptibilities," "heavenly characteristics," "lofty qualities," "luminous graces," "sublime bestowals;" and laws to preserve them and suppress and train the base animal nature in man. Still the majority of mankind chooses to follow its own corrupt inclination. And so "The process of disintegration must inexorably continue, and its corrosive influence must penetrate deeper and deeper into the very core of a crumbling age. Much suffering will still be required ere the contending nations, creeds, classes and races of mankind are fused in the crucible of universal affliction and are forged by the fires of a fierce ordeal into one organic commonwealth, one vast, unified and harmoniously functioning system. Adversities unimaginably appalling, undreamed of crises and upheavals, war, famine, pestilence, might well combine to engrave in the soul of an unheeding generation those truths and principles which it has disdained to recognize and follow. A paralysis more painful than any it has yet experienced must creep over and further afflict the fabric of a broken society ere it can be rebuilt and regenerated."[11]

"The civilization" writes Bahá'u'lláh "so often vaunted by the learned exponents of arts and sciences will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation, bring great evil upon men. . . . If carried to excess, civilization will prove as prolific a source of evil as it had been of goodness when kept within the restraints of moderation. . . . The day is approaching when its flame will devour the cities, when the Tongue of Grandeur will proclaim: 'The Kingdom is God's, the Almighty, the All-Praised!' "[12]

And when the human ego has emptied itself in a final holocaust, and humbled and repentent seeks the shelter of God's Law it shall find His promise sure. For shielded and enshrined within the organism of a New World Order, God's immutable purpose for mankind in this day, has slowly and unobtrusively taken root. "For well nigh a century it has . . . amid the noise and tumult of a distracted age, and despite the incessant persecutions to which its leaders, institutions, and followers have been subjected, succeeded in preserving its identity, in reinforcing its stability and strength, in maintaining its organic unity, in preserving the integrity of its laws and its principles . . . and in extending and consolidating its institutions."[13]

Before mankind, as a whole, may know the ecstasy of functioning in such an organism, it will of its own volition—as foretold by Bahá'u'lláh — bring unimaginable misery and devastation upon itself through violation of these sacred relationships. But it has entered the age of maturity; that

11—The Unfoldment of World Civilization, p. 33-34.

12—Idem, p. 34.

13—Idem, p. 35.

phase in human development when the greatest happiness will be realized in the happiness of others and these hideous fetishes so laboriously built up, will become repellent and so, spontaneously cast aside. Who knows how man will interpret those signs and symbols then? "He who urges the matchless steed of endeavor on the race course of justice and civilization," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "alone is capable of comprehending the wonderful signs of the natural and spiritual world. For is it not written: 'We shall cause them to see Our signs, both in the world and in themselves?' "[14]

14—The Mysterious Forces of Civilization, p. 8.

FAR VISION

GERTRUDE W. ROBINSON

I WOULD look deep within the hearts of those
I meet upon our common road;
Not shallowly, as one indifferent
To beauties hidden from the casual eye.
Below the polished surface I would see
The crying hunger for a comrade's love;
Below a seared and scarred exterior
I would find loveliness.

I would look out beyond the shattering now
And glimpse the ordered peace of life
Made new by love and justice. Else,
How could I build my dream?
For dream I must.

The sky is dark and clouds hang low
But dawn lies just ahead and I have clasped
Love's cord to guide me through the depths
Of shaded night.

I would have understanding faith
And tenderness for friend and foe
In this dark hour;
And lest I fail, I pray for that great gift of God,
Far vision.

ASPECTS OF THE OLD AND NEW ERA

S. TORMO

EACH day which passes brings us nearer, apparently, to a state of things, the solution of which appears impossible, using the methods which characterize the present day.

We find ourselves in the midst of the most desolate chaos,—a chaos without precedent in history. The excess and abundance which abounds has done no more than bring mankind to hunger and misery,—sad contrast and terrible portent.

While now wheat is being sold at prices so low as never to have been experienced in living memory, grapes and wine are being destroyed to limit production, coffee is being burned, and an enormous quantity of fruit never gets to market because it is being thrown away; millions of human beings the wide world over go hungry, and millions of people workless have to be helped by the State.

Individualistic and egoistic tendencies without limits have brought man to the crossroads, where, unless a pause be made to take proper bearings, some road to greater disaster might be taken.

The present era has been notable, amongst other things, for strong competition. That which approaches will have, as a rejuvenating tonic, cooperation. Competition, as we know it, has done no more than separate men and nations. Cooperation will have as its object the unification of mankind.

This conception of unity will doubtless be the salient point in the era which is dawning and will bring as a consequence unity between the nations.

The Bahá'í Cause, the principles of which are unity and cooperation, has, as its symbol, a tree. This Cause shows us how each human being is just a leaf of the tree of humanity. When we come to understand this simple truth we shall better realize how great is God, and, what is more, see in each human being a part of our own selves.

To more fully understand what we are and the role each one of us must play in life depends on a fuller conception of the ideal relationship between ourselves and our fellowmen. This should be productive of pleasure in comprehension, and not arrant intolerance as is so much in evidence just now. Rather than ask, "How many servants have you?" should we rather not inquire, "How many fellow-men do I serve?"

Thus we arrive at the conclusion that to solve the many problems which today oppress mankind, there will be necessary a more intelligent cooperation, and a truer sense of human unity.

Buenos Aires, 1939

IMPRESSIONS OF PANAMA

CORA HITT OLIVER

LOUISE CASWELL

Now we are in one of the oldest buildings in Panama, one which was built directly after the sack of Panama by Sir Henry Morgan in 1669. It is near the old sea wall and from the wide porch which extends the length of the building one may look across the water to the new modern residential section and beyond that the jungles. The scene is subject to constant change because of the shifting tides. Small water craft of Panamanian fishermen are anchored at low tide during which time men, women and children comb the beach for sea food for a variety not known to us yet. Our North American curiosity will not get us out on the beach at low tide as the residents along the sea wall use the water of the bay for a garbage can. When the tide comes in native boys swim in their birthday suits until an officer comes along and makes them put on trunks. The pelicans take advantage of the high tides to get their daily meals and offer us entertaining companionship as we eat our fried fish with gesture of knife and fork while younger brother pelican flies until he spies his swimming morsel, aims at it with his beak and with never failing accuracy dives for it and then rises to the water where he placidly sits, throws his beak in the air and gives a gulp or two and then takes a momentary rest before reconnoitering for further satisfaction of his appetite. Amidst all this beauty we sometimes wonder if what we smell comes from the beach or the menagerie of a parrot, a cat, two dogs and a chicken at the other end of the porch beyond the kitchen. The noise of planes causes us to look skyward and we find it difficult to distinguish between the Man-of-War birds in the foreground and the machines in the distance.

The name Panama means abundant fish, and water is a symbol of life. Here even at night when the world sleeps the play of light on the black water and the ceaseless movement of water from unseen currents reminds us that life is motion and motion never ceases.

We climb up the old stone steps to the narrow street which passes the Presidential Palace and see beautiful egrets strutting in the Patio. The narrow streets with even narrower sidewalks overhung with balconies offer a friendly shelter from the tropical showers while short statured bronze skinned khaki clad policemen (3000 in the city) offer the protection of the

government. And then into the Plaza de Santa Ana, one of the three places in the world of which it is said "in time one can meet everybody on earth."

The plazas on evenings of concerts are crowded with people. The young women in twos and threes walk around in one direction while the men walk in the opposite so they can see each other as they meet. They respond to the music from the open air pavilion showing their preference for syncopation with much applause and honking of automobile horns.

Then off for a ride in a "jingle bell" coach. Off come our hats and the soft tropical breezes refresh us as we wind our way through the narrow streets to the rhythm of the horse's "click-click-click" on the pavement. A moving picture of the family life of the Panamanians unfolds before us through the open windows and doors. Few houses have window panes and doors are rarely closed. Lace curtains replace doors in some cases. We seem to be sailing through the air free from the jostling pedestrian traffic.

By invitation of the head of St. Luke's Children's Episcopal Home we were given an opportunity to see some of the best charity work in Panama. Under the able leadership of Miss Ogden we found efficiency and cleanliness in a happy atmosphere. Children of all races were playing together demonstrating that children are free from prejudice. Miss Ogden told us that the natives had little regard for monogamy demonstrating it with a story of three sisters, one Turkish, one Russian, and one Chinese. The Panamanian mother was held in high esteem by her neighbors. We were also pleasantly impressed with the Sewall Methodist Mission which is considered the best school in Panama.

The Panamanian schools are for the most part in crowded sections of the city. The open doors and windows of the classrooms admit all traffic noises so the voice of education must be raised high to compete with that of traffic. The same holds true of the schools of higher education. The desire of knowledge is so great that students and teachers seem unware of the confusion. To us it was a lesson in concentration.

Dr. Octavio Mendez Pereira, Rector of the National University of Panama and leading literary light of the country, gave us a warm and poetic welcome to the University. He graciously accepted the offer of a gift of Bahá'í books for the library and said that Panama welcomed all ideas, all races, all perfumes; that education was free for all, 25% of the budget being spent for it. He then extended to us the courtesies of the University and Institute and personally conducted us to our classes and introduced us to the new professor from Porto Rico, Dr. Cebollero.

The buildings of the University and Institute cover an entire block in a busy part of Panama just across the street from the Zone. Classes are held from 5:15 to 8:30 in the evening to allow the students who are employed during the day an opportunity to attend. The courts between the buildings are sheltered with palms and tropical trees. Here students of all races associate with perfect amity en-

joying the coolness of the evening under the starlight sky.

It is the rainy season. When the rains come the jitneys scatter and twice we have had to wait an hour for one. After one wait we paddled through an inch of water into a jitney with a leaky top. Our only salvation was that the rain stopped before we had gone far. People do not attempt to go about during the heavy rains but college girls are ready for anything.

Lack of dense vegetation in Panama makes it much dryer than in the Zone where the ground becomes saturated with the heavy downpours, thereby making dry closets an absolute necessity. We have to be on the constant look out to prevent our clothes and luggage from dampness and subsequent mold. However, with eternal vigilance we have been able to protect them so far from tireless mother nature. Since these heavy rains usually do not last more than two or three hours the clouds scatter revealing the sun or moon.

Last night walking home from the Tivoli Hotel down an avenue of royal palms the silver moonlight glistened on the tremulous palm leaves. The full moon like a beautiful queen had no rival in beauty not even the cumulas clouds massed on all sides.

We engaged this place the day after we arrived at "La Marina" where we soon discovered we were allowed no privacy. We have a bedroom and a study over a modern and attractive flower shop located in the highest spot in the city near the beer gardens, the University, the Ancon Post Office, Tivoli Hotel and just across the street from the Zone. The building is an example of the best kind of house to build in this section. It is of stipled concrete with a tile roof extending several feet beyond the walls. One of the most attractive features of the building is the steel gratings over the openings. We have all the comforts of home. No screens are necessary and we don't have to travel with mosquito netting.

The indescribable charm of Panama won us both instantly. Our drinking water is piped from the Chagras River of which it is said if one has once tasted of its waters he always returns. We have drunk deeply.

PUT your trust in God, and commit your affairs to His keeping. He, verily, will, through the power of truth, render you victorious, and He, verily, is powerful to do what He willeth, and in His grasp are the reins of omnipotent might. . . . I swear by My life! Nothing save that which profiteth them can befall My loved ones. To this testifieth the Pen of God, the Most Powerful, the All-Glorious, the Best Beloved. . . . Let not the happenings of the world sadden you. I swear by God! The sea of joy yearneth to attain your presence, for every good thing hath been created for you, and will, according to the needs of the times, be revealed unto you.—BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

HYMN OF THE WORLD

STAMEKO DJURDJEVIC

O OPPRESSORS,
Who through ages have been preparing
The destruction of the world
And the hell of the Day of Judgment,
Do you hear?
Over this earth yet echos
The horrible curse of mothers . . .
You have tortured them enough.

O oppressors,
Redeem the terrible sins and maledictions,
Have pity on the poor soul of the mother of mankind
And make men one blood, one brotherhood.
Remove the dark limits
Behind which humans suffocate
And crush one another in frenzy of wild beasts.

O oppressors,
Do you hear the plea of the planet
In which the mother laments
Your criminal deeds?
Over the whole expanse of earth
The souls burn in the flame of despair!

O oppressors,
The cup of your grievous deeds is full.
Now is the hour for the Hymn of Peace
To sound in glory
From Scandinavia to Transylvania
And from New York to Tokyo!
Let scattered things become one,
One race, one earthly home.

Translated from the Serbian by Draga Ilic.

NABIL'S HISTORY OF THE BÁB

GEORGE TOWNSHEND

II.

As mysteriously Mulla Husayn had been drawn into the presence of the Báb, so the other disciples came to Him, spontaneously and of their own accord, within a few days of His Declaration. After brief instruction, He sent them out far and wide to bear His Message to various parts of the land. Each was to send back to Him the names of all the converts who definitely identified themselves with the New Faith: these the Báb would classify and record.

To Husayn He gave a special mission; and as soon as He was assured of its success, He set forth on October 10th, 1844, with Quddus, the greatest of all the believers, on the distant and difficult mission He had reserved for Himself. He struck at the strategic center of the Muhammadan Faith, and went on the pilgrimage to Mecca and to Medina, to reveal the Cause of God in those sacred spots and to rekindle there, in the spiritual heart of Islam, the Ancient Fire which had so completely disappeared from among men.

He chose, as the recipients of His Message, two individuals whom He knew to be spiritually capable of appreciating it: Mirza Muhit-i-Kirmani and the Sherif of Mecca. Both were men of distinction and influence. If they had the courage to follow the leading of their intuitions and to accept the Revelation, others would follow and the progress of the Cause would be rapid and wide.

Unfortunately for themselves and for their country, neither one nor the other of them proved willing to answer the divine summons. One evaded it, the other ignored it.

Bitterly disappointed, the Báb returned in June, 1845, to Persia. Already in many parts of the land the tidings of the New Faith had been spread by these eager apostles, and had been warmly welcomed by the people. Sundry officers of church and state were quick to suspect that this movement boded them no good and they took alarm from the first. When the Báb went to Shiraz and began there to propagate His Cause with immediate and marvelous success, the Governor of the Province, moved with envy, ordered his arrest, cast him into prison, and determined on his death. The Báb, however, was finally released and permitted to go to Ispahan. Here again He instantly won the hearts of the people. Thousands resorted to him to hear His Message. The priests were stung by jealousy and seventy of them in solemn conclave condemned Him to death for heresy. A friend however, the Mu'tamadu'd-

Dawla, had interested Muhammad Shah in the Báb's Revelation, and by the Shah's order the Báb was taken under escort to interview his Majesty in Tihran. Shortly before He reached the capital, He received from the Shah a letter, written under the influence of the Grand Vizier Haji Mirza Aqasi, in which the promised interview was indefinitely postponed, and the Báb was relegated to a lonely fortress in the wild mountains of northern Persia.

Now a deepening darkness rapidly gathered round the fading fortunes of the Prophet. After nine months' incarceration in Mahku where His personality, as by magic, won over the people of the neighborhood, His jailers, and the warden of the castle, He was transferred by His enemies, in April, 1848, to a still more rigorous imprisonment in Chihriq.

At the same time, the persecution of the Bábis throughout the country was intensified and attacks upon their persons and their property grew more general and more violent. In October of that year, a number of believers in Mazindaran seeking refuge from their assailants withdrew to a disused fort, where they stood at bay for months before their enemies, who were supported by the regular army of the Shah. In May, 1849, being promised that persecution would cease, they gave themselves up and were at once seized and done to death by their perfidious foes. Nine of the Báb's apostles, including Mulla Husayn and Quddus, with numbers of other distinguished Bábis, perished in this massacre.

In March of the following year occurred the death of the Seven Martyrs of Tihran, an episode which has become notorious on account of the prominence of the sufferers, their high character and the publicity of their execution.

Two months later, in Nayriz, a large party of Bábis retreating before their tormentors were surrounded by their enemies and after a stout resistance were destroyed, in circumstances like those of their fellow-believers in Mazindaran. Their leader was Siyyid Yahyay-i-Darabi, known as Vahid, one of the principal dignitaries of the Persian church, and the most learned of all the Báb's followers.

At the same time in Zanjan, a similar investment of Bábi refugees occurred, but on a much larger scale. As many as seventeen regiments of the regular army, together with artillery, were employed on this occasion against the Bábis who were led by another brilliant divine of Islam, known among the Bábis as Hujjat.

The Grand Vizier Haji Aqasi, who had become the arch enemy of the Cause, now concluded that the spirit of the Bábis could not be broken nor the reform movement quelled so long as its Author remained alive. He determined therefore to put the Báb Himself to death. Dispensing with the formalities of any legal process, he, by use of the weight of his official position, had the Báb removed from Chihriq to Tabriz and there summarily condemned to death without trial.

The sentence was carried out in the public square of the city, on July 9, 1850. A curious circumstance delayed for a few minutes the actual execution. The Báb, with a follower who

was to die with Him, was suspended by a rope to a wall, and the firing squad of 750 rifles delivered a volley at close range. The heavy smoke obscured completely the wall and those who hung upon it. When it cleared away, the two condemned men were found to have escaped injury. The rope which bound them had been cut, and the Báb's companion was seen to be standing on the ground unhurt. The Báb had disappeared and was discovered in His prison, whither He had returned to finish a conversation which had been interrupted when his jailors came to lead Him out to execution.

The members of the firing party, terror-stricken at such a prodigy, refused to lift their rifles again against the person of the Prophet, and the authorities were obliged to summon another regiment to consummate their crime.

The news of their Lord's martyrdom soon reached the Bábis standing at bay in Zanjan. They were stunned and horrified but not disheartened. Outnumbered, they held out to the last limit of their strength; and when by force and guile their resistance at last was crushed, hundreds of Bábis, men, women and children passed through the red gates of martyrdom to the Great Beyond, and there rejoined their beloved Master, who had traveled by the same road so short a time before.

By the early autumn of 1850, the reactionaries had, as it seemed, cowed the main body of the believers and had destroyed every Bábi that had shown any capacity for leadership, except two only: Bahá'u'lláh who had espoused the Cause from the first, and Tahirih, the one woman-member of the nineteen apostles.

Through the efforts of these two, and especially the activity of Bahá'u'lláh, the Faith continued to make headway, until in August, 1852, an attack by a deranged Bábi on the person of the Shah gave the authorities a pretext for a general slaughter of believers throughout the country, with the express aim of exterminating the Faith. Tahirih was martyred. Bahá'u'lláh with His dependents was exiled for life.

At this point, when all was at its darkest, and when to all except a few illumined spirits the light of the Cause of God seemed to be quenched for ever, the first volume of Nabil's Narrative closes.

FAITH in God and in His Prophet is the great ideal of the entire action — the sure touchstone to distinguish good from evil, truth from untruth. Righteousness is extolled by the Báb and the highest standard of conduct demanded by Him of His followers, but the purpose of Nabíl was no more to deal in the principles and practice of ethics than to set forth a new theological system. His purpose was to show how Faith had come back into the world and had transformed those in whose hearts its flame was kindled. If his story is epic in the elevation and sublimity of its subject matter, it is in its mood lyrical —a lyric of Faith and of the love that Faith awakes. In the central foreground stands the figure of the Báb. No space is given to sketching the historical, the social or political back-

ground. There is almost no setting to the incidents, the minimum of description, no account of the general circumstances of the time. All the figures in the story, and they are to be counted by hundreds, are grouped around the Báb. Those who choose to turn towards him are seen irradiated by the glory of their Lord; the intenser their Faith the more brilliant the light in which they are bathed. Those who turn away from Him lie in the horror of a darkness which deepens with the gradations of their unbelief. If Nabíl did not set himself to write a formally ordered history he produced a work which has the vital and informing unity that belong to a composition having a single hero, a single theme and one all-pervading dominant emotion. Everywhere in his book Nabíl sets forth Faith as the first of virtues, the first step of man upon the highroad to the presence of God.

Deploring the failure of one of Shaykh Aḥmad's disciples to recognize the real dignity of a Prophet of God, he comments:—

"His faith was weighed in the balance, and was found wanting, in as much as he failed to recognize that He Who must needs be made manifest is endowed with that sovereign power which no man dare question. His is the right 'to command whatsoever He willeth and to decree that which He pleaseth.' Whoever hesitates, whoever, though it be for the twinkling of an eye or less, questions His authority, is deprived of His grace and is accounted of the fallen."

Mullá Ḥusayn himself, the Gate of the Gate, hardly showed the requisite measure of submissiveness. He proposed to apply a test by which He would put the Báb to the proof. "Had you not been my guest," said the Báb to him afterwards, "your position would indeed have been a grievous one. The all-encompassing grace of God has saved you. It is for God to test His servants and not for His servants to judge Him in accordance with their deficient standards."

He told the first of his apostles whom He sent out: — "Your faith must be as immovable as the rock, must weather every storm and survive every calamity". . . .

In his address to the others He said:—"The very members of your body must bear witness to the loftiness of your purpose, the integrity of your life, the reality of your faith, and the exalted character of your devotion. . . . Heed not your weaknesses and frailty; fix your gaze upon the invincible power of the Lord, your God, the Almighty. . . . Arise in his Name, put your trust wholly in Him, and be assured of ultimate victory."

The apostles of the Báb spontaneously through the vigor of their own intuition recognized and adhered to Him. He Himself when in Mecca standing within the most sacred shrine of Islám approached the famous divine Mírzá Muḥit-i-Kirmání, and put his faith to the test with a definite categorical demand. . . . "Verily I declare," He said, "none besides me in this day whether in the East or in the West can claim to be the Gate that leads men to the knowledge of God: My proof is none other than that proof whereby the truth of the prophet Muḥammad was estab-

lished. Ask me whatsoever you please: now at this very moment I pledge myself to reveal such verses as can demonstrate the truth of my mission. You must choose either to submit yourself unreservedly to my Cause or to repudiate it entirely. You have no other alternative. If you choose to reject my message, I will not let go your hand until you pledge your word to declare publicly your repudiation of the truth which I have proclaimed. Thus shall he who speaks the truth be made known, and he that speaks falsely shall be condemned to eternal misery and shame. Then shall the Way of Truth be revealed and made manifest to all men."

The great churchman was broad-minded enough to perceive the truth of the Báb's pronouncement; else the Báb would not have approached him in that manner. He did not dare to deny it. But neither on the other hand did he dare to face the consequences of the public admission which the Báb demanded. He procrastinated. He pretended acceptance and promised submission; then broke his word and fled. "I shall never depart from Medina," he assured the Báb, "whatever may betide, until I have fulfilled my covenant with you." As the mote which is driven before the gale he, unable to withstand the sweeping majesty of the Revelation proclaimed by the Báb, fled in terror from before His face. He tarried awhile in Medina and, faithless to his pledge and disregardful of the admonitions of his conscience, left for Karbila.

Some years later the Muhit, still tormented in conscience, attempted to approach Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb being dead.

"Tell him," was Bahá'u'lláh's reply, "that in the days of my retirement in the mountains of Sulaymániyyih, I in a certain ode which I composed set forth the essential requirements from every wayfarer who treads the path of search in his quest of truth. Share with him this verse from that code: 'If thine aim be to cherish thy life, approach not our court, but if sacrifice be thy heart's desire, come and let others come with thee. For such is the way of faith, if in thy heart thou seekest reunion with Bahá; shouldst thou refuse to tread this path, why trouble us? Begone!' If he be willing, he will openly and unreservedly hasten to meet me; if not I refuse to see him."

Once again, the Muhit's courage failed. He refused to face the consequences of a confession of faith, withdrew and died an unbeliever.

In prison, on the night before His martyrdom, the Báb subjected his three devoted companions to a test of the most extreme severity. He was in a strange elation of spirits. The sadness that for long had weighed him down on account of the death of so many of his followers had vanished. The joy of His approaching sacrifice, the sense of the certain triumph of God's Cause, had dissipated every sorrow. Turning to His disciples He expressed regret that He was to die at the hand of an enemy instead of the hand of a friend. "Would that one of you," He said, "might now arise and with his own hands end my life." They shrank at the thought of taking a life so dear, so precious. Then one of them sprang

to his feet and said that whatever the Báb commanded he would do. His companions interposed; and the Báb because he had shown himself ready to obey to the uttermost, chose him to share on the morrow the crown of martyrdom with his Lord. On the next morning, at the place of execution, he was tied in such a position that his head reposed on the breast of the Báb, and by the violence of the fusillade the two bodies were "shattered and blended into one mass of mingled flesh and bone."

THE New Revelation was often times accepted not so much through intellectual submission to an argument as through the inspiration of a spiritual experience.

The Báb and His followers invited and welcomed scrutiny and careful examination of His teachings; lectures by Bábís were frequently given and the faithful were always ready to meet anyone in intellectual controversy. In some important cases (as in that of the illustrious Vaḥíd and of Nabíl himself) investigation played a great part in conversion. But logical conviction was always supported or anticipated by a strong intuitive impulse. In very many cases the divine illumination was seemingly perceived by the force of sheer insight.

In his account of the call of the Eighteen Apostles Nabíl writes—

"Each of the twelve companions of Mullá 'Alí in his turn and in his own unaided efforts, sought and found his Beloved. Some in sleep, others in waking, a few whilst in prayer, and still others in their moments of contemplation experienced the light of this Divine Revelation and were led to recognize the power of its glory."

The conversion of Ismu'llahu'l-Asdaq, a distinguished Bábí of Isfáhán, through a vision of the Báb (an experience not unparalleled in this chronicle) is quoted in his own words.

Hearing Mullá Ḥusayn had come to Isfáhán he sought him out and met him at night in the home of Mírzá Muḥammad-Aliy-i-Nahn.

"I asked Mullá Ḥusayn to divulge the name of him who claimed to be the Promised Manifestation. He replied, 'To inquire about that name and to divulge it are alike forbidden.' 'Would it then be possible,' I asked, 'for me, even as the Letters of the Living, to seek independently the grace of the All Merciful and through prayer to discover his identity?' 'The Door of his Grace,' he replied, 'is never closed before the face of him who seeks to find him.' I immediately retired from his presence, and requested his host to allow me the privacy of a room in his house where alone and undisturbed I could commune with God. In the midst of my contemplation, I suddenly remembered the face of a youth whom I had often observed while in Karbilá, standing in an attitude of prayer, with his face bathed in tears, at the entrance of the shrine of the Imám Husayn. That same countenance now reappeared before mine eyes. In my vision I seemed to behold that same face, those same features, expressive of such joy as I could never describe. He smiled as he gazed at me. I went towards him, ready to throw myself at his feet. I was bending towards the ground, when lo! that radiant figure

vanished from before me. Overpowered with joy and gladness I ran out to meet Mullá Ḥusayn who, with transport received me and assured me that I had at last attained the object of my desire."

Of the call of Quddús, the last and greatest of the apostles, he writes:- "The next day in the evening hour as the Báb followed by Mullá Ḥusayn was returning to His home there appeared a youth dishevelled and travel-stained. . . . Fixing his gaze upon the Báb, he said to Mullá Ḥusayn: 'Why seek you to hide Him from me? I can recognize Him by His gait. I confidently testify that none beside Him whether in the East or in the West can claim to be the Truth. . . .' "

The narrative continues.

" 'Marvel not,' observed the Báb, at his strange behavior. We have in the world of spirit been communing with that youth. We know him already. We indeed awaited his coming. . . .' "

Of the inclusion of Ṭáhirih, the one woman among the apostles, Nabíl records that ". . . we have seen how instinctively she had been led to discover the Revelation of the Báb and how spontaneously she had acknowledged its truth. Unwarned and uninvited, she perceived the dawning light of the promised Revelation breaking upon the city of Shíráz, and was prompted to pen her message and to plead her fidelity to him who was the revealer of that Light."

The Message which the Bábís proclaimed was primarily one of faith. "Raise the cry," said the Báb to Mullá Ḥusayn, as He sent him out on his first missionary journey; "Awake, awake! for lo! the Gate of God is open, and the morning Light is shedding its radiance upon all mankind. The Promised One is made manifest; prepare the way for Him, O people of the earth! Deprive not yourselves of its redeeming grace, nor close your eyes to its effulgent glory."

The appeal which the Message made was felt to be quite extraordinary and to partake of the nature of pentecostal fire. Nabíl expresses this very definitely in his account of the progress of the Bábí movement in the province of Khurásán.

"There blazed forth," he writes, "in the heart of Khurásán a flame of such consuming intensity that the most formidable obstacles standing in the way of the ultimate recognition of the cause melted away and vanished. That fire caused such a conflagration in the hearts of men that the effects of its quickening power were felt in the most outlying provinces of Persia."

Their hearts aflame with this divinely kindled fire, the Bábís feared no danger, were daunted by no terror, and yielded under no adversity. They endured without a murmur manifold sorrows and sufferings. Indeed they counted it a high and precious privilege to go through tribulation for their Faith's sake, and looked forward to persecution with joy.

"Ever since the beginning of this holy enterprise, upon which I have embarked," cried Mullá Ḥusayn, "I have vowed to seal with my life blood my own destiny. For his sake I have

welcomed immersion in an ocean of tribulation. I yearn not for the things of this world. I crave only the good pleasure of my beloved. Not until I shed my blood for his name will the fire that glows within me be quenched."

Those chiefly responsible for the attacks on the Bábís were the officials of the state-church who owed their privilege and power to the ignorance and superstition of the people and were quick to see that the onrush of this crusading reformation movement would sweep them and all their depravities away forever unless it was instantly and remorselessly strangled. They used their influence to rouse their fanatical followers in the name of orthodoxy against the innovators. A supine and apathetic government made no effort to quell disorder or to prevent violence. On the contrary the officials of the state were inclined not only to wink at but even to take part in the riots, the plunderings and the massacres. The Bábís had no protection, no redress, no assurance or hope of justice. Before them lay the clear prospect of ostracism, of spoliation and probably of torture and death.

As one of the Bábís who were driven to bay in Zanján stated in answer to the denunciations of the Amil-Tirman: "God knows that we are and will ever remain loyal and law-abiding subjects of our sovereign, with no other desire than to advance the true interests of his government and people.

"We have been grievously misrepresented by our ill-wishers. No one of the Sháh's representatives was inclined to protect or befriend us; no one was found to plead our cause before him. We repeatedly appealed to him, but he ignored our entreaty and was deaf to our call. Our enemies, emboldened by the indifference which characterized the attitude of the ruling authorities, assailed us from every side, plundered our property, violated the honor of our wives and daughters, and captured our children. Undefended by our government and encompassed by our foes we felt constrained to arise and defend our lives."

Nothing that the armies of corruption could do acted as a deterrent to the Bábís. Faith had quickened in their hearts so impetuous and unquenchable a flame of heavenly love that earthly danger and suffering held no terrors for them. As love prompted them, as their master bade them, they went forward on their crusading way, proclaiming their belief, calling aloud the Glad Tidings, summoning all men to give heed and not to remain blind to the light of so glorious a Day. The foreknowledge of destruction heightened their enthusiasm and intensified their activity.

Vaḥíd from the day he gave his adhesion to the cause, yearned to lay down his life for his Lord's sake, and testified to his joy when before the siege of Nayríz he saw the longed-for day was approaching.

Mullá Ḥusayn when he had raised the Black Standard, before the siege of Mázindarán commenced, knew what the issue would be, and warned his followers in time.

"I together with seventy-two of my beloved companions shall suffer death for the sake of the Well-Beloved.

Whoso is unable to renounce the world, let him now at this very moment depart, for later on he will be unable to escape."

Ḥujjat shortly before his death, when he had just seen his own wife and child killed by the enemy, testified to his own premonitions of suffering for the Báb's sake and to his joy therein.

"The day whereon I found Thy beloved one, Oh my God," he cried, "and recognized in him the Manifestation of thine Eternal Spirit, I foresaw the woes that I should suffer for thee. Great as have been until now my sorrows, they can never compare with the agonies that I would willingly suffer in thy name. How can this miserable life of mine, the loss of my wife and of my child, and the sacrifice of the band of my kindred and companions, compare with the blessings which the recognition of thy Manifestation has bestowed on me! Would that a myriad lives were mine, would that I possessed the riches of the whole earth and its glory, that I might resign them all freely and willingly in thy path."

(*To be continued*)

In part I, Nabil's faith and experience are described and his narrative carried to the Báb's declaration to Mulla Husayn.

THIS is the day in which to speak. It is incumbent upon the people of Bahá to strive, with the utmost patience and forbearance, to guide the peoples of the world to the Most Great Horizon. Every body calleth aloud for a soul. Heavenly souls must needs quicken, with the breath of the Word of God, the dead bodies with a fresh spirit. Within every word a new spirit is hidden. Happy is the man that attaineth thereunto, and hath arisen to teach the Cause of Him Who is the King of Eternity. . . . Say: O servants! The triumph of this Cause hath depended, and will continue to depend, upon the appearance of holy souls, upon the showing forth of goodly deeds, and the revelation of words of consummate wisdom.—BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

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